

THE GRIP OF HONOR

Cyrus Townsend Brady,

Author of "The Leatherstocking," "In the Wake of the Wind," etc.

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BY NOTES OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Chapter I.—While cruising in the ship "Honor," Paul Jones, the famous privateer, was seen upon the coast of the island of St. Helena, flying the flag of the American republic, but in the hands of the British. The ship was a wreck and the crew was scattered. The ship was a wreck and the crew was scattered. The ship was a wreck and the crew was scattered.

CHAPTER II.

ADY ELIZABETH, you

here? He exclaimed, stop-

ping short in great surprise.

"What is the meaning of

this?" He stood a moment as if

in a dream, and then came back

with a stern expression. "Who

is this person?" he demanded imper-

iously. Elizabeth started violently.

"Major Coventry," Edward said

calmly.

"Are you a 'Lady,' madam?" said

O'Neill in equal surprise, addressing

the astonished girl and paying no at-

tention to the officer.

"For what else do you take her, sir?"

interrupted the officer, looking with in-

credulity.

"Eh, sir, I would take her for bet-

ter or worse, as I could," replied the

Irishman smiling.

"Unfortunately for you, that is a

privilege I propose to exercise myself,"

said the Englishman sternly.

"The world will doubtless share my

regret, sir," said the Irishman an-

grily, in a bitter pang in his breast at

this unlooked for news.

"Now I wish to know who you are

and how you came here and what you

are doing—an explanation, sir," asked

the officer.

"I am not accustomed to give ex-

planations save to those who have the

right to demand them," replied O'Neill.

"I have two rights, sir."

"They are?"

"First, I am betrothed to this young

lady," said the officer. "Second, this

lady is my daughter."

"Either of these may be sufficient

from your point of view, neither of

from mine. As to the first, I

refer you to the young lady herself.

I will have it from her own lips or

at all; as to the second, you will see I

have a similar right of my own."

"Will you, Lady Elizabeth," said

the young officer, addressing her formally,

"have the goodness to inform me how

you came here and who this person is,

or shall I force the knowledge from

him?"

"If you wish him to have the infor-

mation, Miss Howard, you would, I

think, better give it him. Otherwise I

do not see how he is to get it," said

O'Neill grimly, his dark face flushing

with anger.

"This gentleman," said the girl faint-

ly, pointing to the officer, "is Major

Edward Coventry, the son of my guar-

dian, Admiral Westbrooke."

"And your betrothed, Elizabeth, you

forget that," added Coventry.

"I almost wish I could," she replied

sharply, uttering courage. "You re-

minded me of too constantly for me to

be pleasant and at no time so inopport-

une as at the present."

The Englishman in great astonish-

ment and perturbation opened his

mouth to speak, but he was inter-

rupted by the quick Irishman.

"Why so, Mistress Howard?"

"Lady Elizabeth, if you please, sir,"

said Coventry.

"Lady Elizabeth, then, I thank you,

for the reminder," answered O'Neill

smiling. "Your friends on the Ranger

are all interested in your welfare, and

I am sure they are glad in my person

to meet with and congratulate the for-

tunate gentleman who aspires to your

hand." He smiled bitterly at her as he

spoke.

"Will you tell me or not, Lady Eliza-

beth, who this person is and how you

came here?" said Coventry impatient-

ly, with mounting color at all this by-

play.

"This is a lieutenant of the American

Continental ship Ranger, Captain John

Paul Jones."

"The d-d murdering pirate!" ex-

claimed Coventry hotly.

"You are wrong, sir," said O'Neill, step-

ping forward with his hand on his sword.

"You shall neither swear before a lady

nor shall you in this scandalous man-

ner disparage the ship of which I have

the honor to be the first lieutenant nor

aspire the character of her captain.

Withdraw your words or you shall an-

swer to me with that which hangs by

your side."

"I fight only with gentlemen," said

Coventry coolly.

"My custom," replied O'Neill promp-

ly, "is in the main the same as your

own, but I sometimes make exceptions,

which I am willing to do in this in-

stance. I require you immediately, in-

stantly, to apologize to me for your

remarks."

"And if I refuse?"

"I shall strike them down your throat

with my hand."

"A death, sir! How dare you, a

brave and adventurous fellow like me,

offer a man, in the way of my

gracious majesty, King George, a Co-

ventry, a Westbrooke!"

"If you were an angel from heaven

"I would make no difference to me, for

I would have you know, sir, that I am

of as good a house as—aye, a better

than—your own, a descendant of

knights!"

"An Irishman, I infer?" said Co-

ventry, sneering.

"You are correct, sir, and my people

have been chiefs for thirty genera-

tions."

"Ah, in Ireland? The manner of the

question made it another insult, but

O'Neill restrained himself under the

ing. The maid, as usual, was furnish-

ing a comic side to the scene by her

screams of "Murder! Help!" while the

sailors were deeply interested in the

two combatants.

Finally after an especially vicious

thrust on the part of Coventry, whose

foot slipped a little, a clever parry, fol-

lowed by a dashing riposte en quarte,

which was met and returned with less

skill than usual, O'Neill, with a grace-

ful turn of the wrist, whirled the En-

glishman's sword from his hand. It

flew up into the air and fell clanging

on the rocks some distance away.

Coventry was unarmed and helpless

before a bitter enemy. He was the

stronger of the two, and it flashed into

his mind to spring upon his antagonist

suddenly, catch him in his arms, and

overcome him by brute force, but the

glittering point of his enemy's sword,

shining in the sunlight like a ser-

pent's tongue, effectively barred the

way. He had played the game and

lost. If he must die in the presence of

his love, he would do it like a gen-

tleman on the sword's point.

"Strike, sir!" he said hoarsely, with

one quick glance toward Lady Eliza-

beth, who stood perfectly motionless,

looking on in terror. She would have

run forward had it not been for old

Paul Jones, who stood by her side.

"Oh, he will be killed; he will be killed!"

cried the maid.

"And if I persist in my refusal?"

asked Coventry, who was paying for

his sword.

"At this juncture I shall be under

the painful necessity of killing you in

the presence of your betrothed; so

draw, my dear sir, if not for honor,

for safety."

"On guard!" cried the Englishman,

whipping out his sword.

"Stop!" cried Elizabeth, springing be-

tween their swords. "He saved my

life at the risk of his own."

"Curse him!" said the Englishman,

grinding his teeth.

"Your condemnation comes too late,

sir," said O'Neill with bitter emphasis,

with an expressive glance at Elizabeth,

who continued impatiently.

"This gentleman treated me with the

most distinguished courtesy."

"I wish that he had exhibited some

of it here," interrupted Coventry an-

grily. "I have followed your own ex-

ample," replied O'Neill calmly.

"Will you hear me in silence, Ed-

ward? They are not pirates!"

"I call them so," said Coventry stub-

bornly.

"Enough, Lady Elizabeth," said

O'Neill, taking his share in the con-

versation again. "Two lovers are

sometimes an embarrassment of riches.

This is a distinguished courtesy."

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